

Cambian Northampton School

67a Queens Park Parade, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN2 6LR

Inspection dates

28–30 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Adequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good enough to ensure that they all make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not implement the school's behaviour policy, rewards and sanctions consistently to improve pupils' self-motivation.
- Senior leaders have not made systematic use of information from the assessment of pupils' achievement to evaluate whether pupils are making sufficient progress from their starting points.
- A small number of pupils are persistently absent and this restricts their progress.
- The proprietor and senior leaders have not fully addressed the areas for improvement at the time of the previous inspection, to ensure that pupils behave appropriately in class and make the progress of which they are capable.
- The proprietor and senior leaders have not ensured that the school fully meets the independent school standards related to classroom behaviour.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has immediately identified appropriate areas for improvement and gained the respect of senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- Staff have a good understanding of pupils' emotional and social needs. They develop positive relationships with pupils. Consequently, the majority of pupils enjoy attending school.
- Pupils make good progress with managing their anger and aggression. They treat staff and each other with respect.
- The broad curriculum includes valuable vocational activities that help prepare pupils effectively for future employment.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective. Pupils are safe and staff respond diligently and promptly to pupils' anxieties and concerns.
- The proprietor has introduced suitable arrangements for governance of the school, although they do not focus sufficiently on pupils' attitudes and progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Evaluate and improve the implementation of the school's behaviour policy to ensure that:
 - teachers are equipped with the skills and strategies required to implement the school's expectations of behaviour consistently
 - pupils apply consistent effort and responsibility to their learning across all subjects
 - pupils make consistently good progress with their learning as a result of improved attitudes and self-motivation.
- Use information gained from regular assessment of pupils' learning to evaluate and improve the extent of pupils' progress from their various starting points.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that teaching at the school:
 - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their abilities so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
 - fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves
 - utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b) and 3(h)).
- The proprietor must ensure that:
 - they comply with the standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, by encouraging pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour (paragraphs 5, 5(b) and 5(b)(iii))
 - the behaviour policy is implemented effectively (paragraphs 9 and 9(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a) and (b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the proprietor and senior leaders have not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- The school has not met the requirements of regulations related to pupils' behaviour for learning and the implementation of the school's behaviour policy. Staff are not consistently successful in ensuring that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and appropriate work habits.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful. This has a constructive impact on behaviour around the school and on relationships between pupils. However, pupils do not all have sufficient self-respect or desire to accept the challenge of working hard in lessons to achieve success.
- Senior leaders have not given sufficient priority to the evaluation of teaching and learning, or to whether pupils make sufficient progress from their starting points.
- The recently appointed headteacher has quickly identified the need to work together with staff to improve pupils' attitudes to learning. She is aware of the need to review the implementation of the rewards system and to ensure that pupils share the commitment of staff to enable them to make consistently good progress.
- Staff who completed an inspection questionnaire are proud to work at the school, although some support staff identified the need for greater clarity about the school's aims and further training to fulfil their roles effectively.
- The headteacher demonstrates ambition and clarity of purpose for pupils to overcome their barriers to learning and to enjoy success. She has established regular meetings with the senior management team; these include continuous oversight of arrangements for safeguarding pupils. In addition, she has amended teachers' timetables to increase contact time, revised the length of some lessons and implemented weekly staff training meetings.
- The headteacher has also identified appropriate areas for further improvement. These include greater clarity in the use of pupils' personal targets; developing the potential of the school site; implementing leadership awards for pupils; planning effective pathways through the curriculum; and ensuring more coherent use of external accreditations.
- The school provides a broad curriculum with a balance between core academic subjects and vocational options. Senior leaders have identified the need to improve the range and quality of practical subjects and to prepare all pupils consistently for further education, training and employment.
- Senior leaders have established effective arrangements for the implementation and review of pupils' education, health and care plans. Staff have a good understanding of the social and emotional needs of vulnerable pupils; they engage effectively with external agencies to ensure that the intentions of plans are fulfilled.
- The school promotes British values well. Staff have established strong relationships with the local mayor, community services and religious leaders. Pupils have good opportunities to learn from visitors representing these services and to visit community facilities and

locations.

Governance

- The proprietor has established appropriate arrangements to provide support to school leaders and to monitor provision.
- The regional manager provides regular, on-site support and challenge through the review of the school's work. He implements appropriate arrangements to review the performance of the headteacher.
- Governance arrangements do not currently have a sufficient focus on pupils' attitudes to learning and their progress towards challenging personal targets.
- The headteacher reports regularly to the governors, including updating their awareness of planned and current improvements.
- The headteacher has delegated responsibility for the management of the performance of staff. She has established an appropriate programme of target setting and appraisal of performance to commence during the summer term.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is given a high priority in the training and allocated responsibilities of staff. The deputy headteacher oversees robust arrangements to identify and address any concerns or individual pupil needs.
- The school publishes its safeguarding policy on the school website. Senior leaders review the policy regularly and ensure that it has regard to the latest statutory guidance. Staff are trained appropriately to identify and address different forms of abuse, including child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not always demonstrate adequate expectations of pupils. At times, they accept pupils' low expectations of themselves and do not have sufficiently developed strategies to engage and motivate pupils continuously.
- Many pupils are not sufficiently committed to their learning. A number lack self-motivation and do not demonstrate sufficient interest or take personal responsibility for their learning. They do not take enough pride in their written work or make sufficient effort to do their best.
- Staff do not always challenge pupils to think deeply enough or to write in sufficient detail to reach the standards of which they are capable. Teachers do not always provide sufficient guidance to help pupils understand how to organise their answers or how much detail is required. As a result, pupils do not always make sufficient progress from their starting points.
- Pupils mostly respect their teachers; they listen attentively and are prepared to join in discussion and answer questions orally. However, they do not consider the ideas of others seriously enough or expand and explain their answers. Consequently, they do not think or discuss with sufficient depth and detail.
- Pupils demonstrate the ability to develop their ideas well when staff reshape their

questions, simplify their language, or break a task down into sections that are more manageable. Pupils are proud of their ideas when they are confident that they have 'got it right'.

- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and they plan learning objectives and activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils in personal and social education, for example, consider appropriate responses to real-life incidents of bullying, illustrated well by suitable resources.
- The great majority of pupils are not hostile or deliberately disruptive. Staff challenge any derogatory or unsuitable language and they maintain an orderly environment based on respect and consideration for pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants intervene effectively when individual pupils require additional help. They are often successful in building individual pupils' confidence and keeping them engaged in their learning.
- Pupils respond positively and improve the quality of their work when teachers model answers and guide them systematically to help them recognise the standards expected of them.
- School leaders and all staff working with pupils in classrooms demonstrate exemplary commitment to the support and progress of vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Within the limits of the school's staffing resources, they provide effective on-to-one working arrangements to address the identified learning needs of individuals.
- Teachers plan activities that focus appropriately on the development of pupils' reading, writing and numeracy skills. Pupils, for example, overcame initial resistance and developed their ability to read maps and follow directions during a visit to an environmental education site, due to the patience and encouragement of staff.
- Pupils sometimes demonstrate sustained interest and the ability to express their ideas accurately and comprehensively, mostly when working individually or under the direct supervision of an adult. Pupils, for example in level 1 functional skills mathematics, learn how to record data, create a simple spreadsheet and construct both pie charts and bar graphs from the results.
- The school has recently introduced appropriate, revised arrangements for the regular assessment of pupils' work. Staff test pupils to establish a reliable baseline against which to measure their progress by half-termly assessments. This regular assessment of pupils' achievements has not been in operation for long enough to enable staff to judge accurately whether pupils' progress matches or exceeds national averages from their starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The majority of pupils have had negative previous experiences of education, often including significant periods of non-attendance. This results in a lack of self-confidence and limited skills in managing their own learning.

- Senior leaders and staff demonstrate patience, good humour and commitment to ensuring that pupils develop emotional resilience and positive learning habits. This is a challenging task but pupils recognise the care and respect shown to them.
- Staff provide effective support for pupils who experience anxiety or apprehension about school. Staff are perceptive, anticipate concerns and intervene appropriately to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Staff ensure that pupils have good opportunities to prepare for the future, including effective careers guidance, work experience placements and vocational courses which enable them to understand the demands of the workplace. Pupils mostly work well in these vocational environments and enjoy the opportunity to develop skills, for example in animal care, motor mechanics or construction.
- Pupils contribute to the care and maintenance of the premises. During the inspection, they contributed to partial redecoration and improvement of the dining room and café. They also help with the presentation of effective displays related, for example, to British values or e-safety.
- Staff provide effective opportunities for pupils to understand risks to their health and safety. External agencies, including the police, prison service and representatives of different cultures, contribute to pupils' understanding of risks, threats and positive opportunities in the wider community.
- High levels of staff supervision, and positive relationships throughout the school community, ensure that pupils are safe in school.
- Staff work well together, across the daily life of the school, to ensure pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They take every opportunity to enhance pupils' understanding of what is required of good citizens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Despite the positive role models demonstrated by staff, and pupils' recognition of adults' care for them, classroom behaviour is not good enough to enable them to make good progress. The majority of pupils do not sustain their concentration and effort for long enough to complete their work to a high standard.
- There is a distinct contrast between pupils' good behaviour around school, including respectful relationships with staff, and their general indifference to the standards of their work in lessons. Occasionally, individual pupils disturb the learning of others by low-level distracting behaviour. More frequently, pupils demonstrate immaturity in their attitudes to learning and do not make adequate effort.
- Overall, attendance is below the national average; persistent absence by a small number of pupils contributes negatively to the whole-school average. However, the majority of pupils who have previously had poor attendance improve their attendance significantly, including attendance at alternative provisions and work experience placements.
- Senior staff are diligent in following up any unexplained absences. They work effectively with parents and external agencies to ensure that no pupil is at risk because of non-attendance.
- Serious incidents are rare. Staff work tirelessly to raise pupils' expectations of their own

behaviour and to enable them to address issues of anger and aggression. School records show strong improvement over time in the behaviour of pupils with previously hostile, belligerent or disrespectful attitudes. Staff diligence ensures that bullying is rare and pupils mostly get on well together.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Current pupils entered the school with mostly low starting points in English and mathematics. Baseline assessments on entry demonstrate weaknesses in spelling, grammar and numeracy. Many pupils read well at a level which equips them effectively to access the curriculum across the full range of subjects.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress over time. A number of pupils make expected levels of progress but too few make progress at a rate sufficient to close the gaps in their previous learning.
- The majority of pupils do not demonstrate a commitment to reading regularly. There are exceptions, including individual pupils who are proud of their recent progress with reading and their recognition that this now enables them to better understand tasks and activities in lessons.
- Pupils' progress is gradual and inconsistent. Limited assessment records from previous years demonstrate that the most able pupils do not progress rapidly enough to enable them to achieve higher-grade GCSE success at key stage 4.
- Pupils do achieve functional skills awards, mostly at entry level. For some, including those with special educational needs, this represents good achievement. However, pupils' attitudes to learning, particularly developing their oral and written answers to the standard of which they are capable, restrict their rates of progress.
- Many pupils in previous cohorts have achieved external qualifications that enable them to continue into further education or training. The school's records are not sufficiently precise to ensure an accurate evaluation of whether this represents good or better progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who attend courses at alternative providers or who complete extended work experience placements mostly work well and achieve qualifications that enable them to apply successfully for employment, including apprenticeships.
- The majority of pupils who left the school in summer 2016 achieved foundation level GCSE grades in English and mathematics, together with functional skills entry-level 3 qualifications in literacy, numeracy and science. A small number achieved GCSE art, including grade C, or vocational qualifications in hair and beauty.
- These represent good achievements for some pupils. However, pupils do not achieve well across a sufficiently wide range of subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	131802
DfE registration number	928/6067
Inspection number	10026048

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Group
Chair	Anne-Marie Currie
Headteacher	Rebecca Hill
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,000
Telephone number	01604 719711
Website	http://www.cambiangroup.com
Email address	Northampton.School@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	25 February 2014

Information about this school

- Cambian Northampton School is located in the Kingsthorpe area of Northampton. It occupies a detached house which has been refurbished to operate as an independent secondary day school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, together with associated challenging behaviour.
- The school is registered to admit up to 24 pupils aged 11 to 16 years; there are currently 18 pupils on the school roll. The majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan related to their social, emotional and learning needs. A small number are looked after by their local authorities and reside in children's homes operated by the school's

proprietor.

- The school uses the services of the following alternative providers to extend the curricular opportunities available to pupils: Melton Mowbray Learning Hub; Moulton College and Northampton College.
- At the time of the school's previous inspection, the school operated under the proprietorship of Advanced Education Ltd.
- The headteacher was appointed to the school during March 2017. At the time of this inspection, she had been in post for three weeks.
- The school's classroom motto is to 'give respect and get respect'.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in various subjects across the full age range of the school, including a visit to a local environmental education site. He scrutinised examples of pupils' work in a variety of subjects. In addition, he attended a whole-school assembly.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietor's regional manager, the headteacher, senior leaders, and additional members of staff. He also considered responses to an inspection questionnaire submitted by eight members of staff and a school questionnaire submitted by three pupils.
- There were no responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector held informal discussions with a number of pupils.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of school policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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